

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES
January 26, 2017**

Members Present	Members Absent
John Honig	Amoke Alakoye
Mary Petrizzo	Noureen Chochan
Judy Peres	Karen Maricheau
Noelle Heyman	Jerry Morenoff
Richard Jourdenais	Monica Schaeffer
Stephanie Edelstein	
Syed Yusuf	COA Alumni
Revathi Vikram	Morton Davis
Morton Faller	Charles Kauffman
Bonnie Klem	
Hileia Seeger	Liaisons
Sue Guenther	Austin Heyman, Office of Community Partnerships
David Denton	Morton Davis, Keeping Seniors Safe
Isabelle Schoenfeld	James Campbell, Commission on Veterans Affairs,
	Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation
	Staff
	John J. Kenney, Department of Health and Human Services
	Odile Brunetto, Department of Health and Human Services
	Lily Fischer, Department of Health and Human Services
	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health and Human Services
	Marcia Pruzan, Department of Health and Human Services

Call to order–Chair, Noelle called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Welcome and Introductions–Noelle Heyman welcomed all attendees. Staff and guest introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes–December minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report–Treasurer Revathi Vikram reported that the COA account has a balance of \$6,405.82.

- **Chair’s Report**–Noelle announced the new Design for Life Coalition is submitting a grant proposal to develop a “small home repair” program for people aging in place.
- The Boards, Committees, and Commission met on January 24th, Stephanie Edelstein represented the COA. The Age Friendly Montgomery County (AFMC) Advisory Group met on January 25th, Isabelle Schoenfeld represented the COA.

- National Active and Retired Federal Employee Association (NARFE)-Noelle met with the Western Region of NARFE on January 13th to share information about the work of the Commission, the Senior Agenda and the Age Friendly Initiative.
- USM in Annapolis on January 25, 2017- Syed Yusuf represented the COA at the USM. The United Seniors of Maryland (USM) is an opportunity for AARP members, volunteers and individuals 50 and over to meet and speak with Maryland elected and appointed officials including but not limited to the Governor, the Senate President, the House Speaker, and the leadership in the House and Senate. Topics of discussion were the rising cost of prescription drugs, concerns about Medicare and Medicaid, affordable housing and how to protect seniors from fraud.
- Council President Berliner-Noelle has been invited to attend a roundtable on February 19th with Councilman Berliner and his advisors to focus on senior issues.
- Myrna Cooperstein-A moment of silence was held to reflect on Myrna's recent passing. For more than 17 years, Myrna Cooperstein helped lead the Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington (JCA). In 1999, she joined the charity's Board of Directors, and recently became a JCA Trustee. She was a member of the JCA Adult Day Committee, chairing it for eight years. Under Myrna's leadership, JCA expanded its Misler Adult Day Center in Rockville, MD, established caregiver support groups, and the Gorlitz Kensington Clubs. Myrna served on the Montgomery County, MD Commission on Aging (COA) from March 2010 to January 2016. She was elected by her COA peers as an officer, and served as the Secretary. She also chaired the Health and Wellness Committee, and served on the Executive Committee and the Nominating Committee. Since her retirement from the COA, she was a member of the COA alumni group. A donation was sent to Jewish Council on Aging on behalf of the COA.
- Primary Care Coalition dental program letter of support-The COA provided a letter of support for the Primary Care Coalition/Dental program which a grant proposal was finalized and submitted with the proposal packet.
- Neal Potter Award-The Neal Potter Path of Achievement Awards will honor two recipients 60 years of age or better whose accomplishments and lifelong commitment to volunteer service make them outstanding role models for young and old alike. The name of the award honors former County Executive Neal Potter. Noelle requested volunteers to submit names of those who are involved in the county and commissioners Revathi, Isabelle and John who are on the Task Force Committee will review the applications along with Kathleen Stobie from Montgomery County Volunteer Center.

Communication priorities and COA involvement-

Austin Heyman spoke about the Communication and Community Outreach (CCO) committee that is not active at the present time. Austin explained the history of the CCO, the genesis of COA support for the Seniors Today television program and the need for a strong and ongoing Communications Committee. The report from the Summit on Aging in December 2015 identified that communication is a challenge in the County. The Age Friendly Advisory groups were given a list of cross

collaboration to work with and every workgroup listed communication as a being a an issue on their list of tasks. Austin explained how it took 10 years to get funding for a monthly insert in the Beacon, last year Councilman Berliner added \$10,000 to the budget to reach the diverse population and that the COA should focus on making sure this committee does not get pushed aside. Seniors Today need commissioners to volunteer to join in on a conference call that is held the first Friday of every month to support its programming.

Dementia Friendly Initiative–

Lylie Fisher addressed the audience about the Dementia Friendly Initiative which official launched on December 5, 2016. Dementia friendly communities are gaining traction as Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias pervade our aging population. Lylie explained the genesis of this national initiative (Bright Focus), the involvement of local businesses, fire and safety personnel and the impact of a new program developed by Montgomery County Police—as well as how it fits into the Age Friendly initiative, the similarities between the two programs and plans to integrate the Dementia Friendly initiative into the county’s Age Friendly initiative. The program addresses the impact of the disease on caregivers and how best to support community residents caring for a loved one with a disease. The successful training program engaged collaboration between the police and fire and rescue and is now being offered to all new public safety recruits and current fire and rescue personnel.

Aging and Disability Report–

A&D Chief Dr. John J. Kenney provided updates on the budget: Montgomery Council approved increase in County minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2020. Approval of Bill 12-16 makes Montgomery one of the first jurisdictions in the nation with \$15 minimum wage.

As enacted, Bill 12-16 will:

- Extend the incremental increases set in County law to go up to \$15 per hour effective July 1, 2020 for employers with 26 or more employees. Under the bill’s transition provisions, the County minimum wage for these employers would increase to \$12.50 in 2018, \$13.75 in 2019 and \$15.00 in 2020.
- Require, beginning in 2021²⁰²³, annual adjustments to the minimum wage by the annual average increase, if any, in the Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers for the previous calendar year.

Among the amendments approved was one proposed by Councilmembers Elrich and Leventhal that changes the minimum wage schedule for businesses employers with 25 or fewer employees so that they reach \$15 per hour two years later than larger employers. The phase in schedule for smaller employers will be \$12 per hour effective July 1, 2018; \$12.75 per hour on July 1, 2019; \$13.50 per hour on July 1, 2020; \$14.25 per hour on July 1, 2021; and \$15 per hour on July 1, 2022.

Another amendment proposed by Councilmembers Elrich and Leventhal and approved would give the County Executive the ability to pause implementation of a scheduled increase if economic conditions worsen. The conditions that could trigger a pause are: if total private employment for Montgomery County decreased by 1.5 percent over the period from April 1 to June 30 of the previous year; total private employment for Montgomery County decreased by 2.0 percent over the period from Jan. 1

to June 30 of the previous year; the Gross Domestic Product of the United States experiences negative growth for the preceding two quarters; or the National Bureau of Economic Research determines that the United States economy is in recession.

An amendment proposed by Councilmember Riemer and approved will require the County's Office of Legislative Oversight to monitor the impact of increases in the County minimum wage and provide annual reports to the Council on the impacts.

Dr. Kenney described the budget process related to seniors. All Departments that have senior programs and services submit their budget requests which informs the CE's Senior Initiative budget. OMB convenes the cluster of Departments who have "senior" programs/services and asks them to identify five priorities.

Area Agency on Aging Report—AAA Director Dr. Odile Brunetto provided several updates:

- There are 26 applicants who have applied for the COA. There are nine vacancies. Interviews will begin the week of January 30th.
- Marcia Pruzan has been hired as the Senior Fellow Age Friendly for Montgomery County
- Dementia Friendly America Initiative/Collaborative Integration with Age Friendly Montgomery County is underway.
- With the departure of 9 commissioners there is a need of COA liaisons for the following groups: Guardianship Program which meets monthly, In Home Care which meets quarterly, and the Recreation Department Advisory Group which meets monthly.
- Seniors Today Taskforce is requesting COA support for their monthly conference call. he conference calls are once a month and require different levels of involvement.
- Governor Larry Hogan's budget has \$1 million of state funds transferred from DHMH to MDoA for FY18 to support seniors in need in the community.
- County Council hearing on February 7th at 1:30pm on the new recreation center in Silver Spring. Topics to be discussed are: swimming pool/senior housing/HOC/MNCPPC partnerships.
- County will soon release an RFP partnership: old Silver Spring library for redevelopment with MNCPPC/recreation department for senior housing and multicultural and recreational activities.
- Health Promotion Program was nominated and won a National Council on Aging second place Award for Bone Builders video which can be located at: www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-prevention-awareness-day/general-resources/falls-free-video-contest-winners/
- The Commission on Aging was instrumental in advocating for NACO's live Healthy Program with expanded dental discounts and other health services. Information can be found at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPR/live-healthy.html
- The Maryland Attorney General filed a lawsuit in Montgomery County Circuit Court against NMS, a nursing home chain that operates two facilities in Montgomery County, there is a freeze placed on any future admissions. The Washington Post published an article regarding the unprecedented action, and the ombudsman program continues to work behind the scenes in documenting unscrupulous business practices that directly affect the lives of the residents at NMS.

- Department of Aging Budget Hearings will take place on February 22nd and February 23rd in Annapolis, Odile will attend one hearing and Noelle will attend one as well.
- Pazit Aviv's annual report on Villages indicates great progress. The county now has 20 active villages with 10 more on the way.

Commission Business–

- Orientation Task Force: A group of interested Commissioners including Mary Petrizzo will work with Odile to build on the success of the current Commissioner orientation process.
- Isabelle is interested in developing an operations manual for the COA. The Executive Committee agreed that an operations manual would be helpful. Work can begin on the manual when the bylaws are finalized.
- County Executive FY18 Budget Forum Updates–Commissioners attended local budget forums in their districts. Due to the length of time for participants to ask questions to the County Executive the talking points focused on specific questions about affordable housing.
- Stakeholders Forum Update- The Stakeholders meeting is scheduled for March 29th at the Silver Spring Civic Building from 8:30am-12:30pm. The stakeholders forum will introduce Montgomery County's "Age Friendly Montgomery initiative" and educate county seniors and those who serve them about the initiative. The COA stakeholders forum will also educate senior residents and those who serve them about the benefits of and progress made on the initiative and obtain feedback, thoughts, suggestions, ideas and insights from participants about needs, gaps and progress.
- Committee Recruitment- Noelle suggested that each committee recruit for new members during the COA meetings she also stated that all commissioners are to participate on at least one committee along with the Commission on Aging.

COA February Meeting–will take place at Holiday Park Senior Center on Feb 23rd from 9am-12pm.**COA Committee Reports**

Aging in Place/Community and Planning Committee (AIP/C&P) –

Mary Petrizzo and Bonnie Klem who are the new co-chairs for AIPC&P welcomed and introduced themselves to the committee. Austin Heyman reported that the next meeting of Age-Friendly Montgomery will be held on January 25th at which time the strategic plans of the different work groups will be discussed. Leslie Marks of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs reviewed the 2 priorities for the Age-Friendly/Aging in Place workgroup: 1) increase the supply of affordable housing, 2) promote availability of wrap-around services for senior living communities with primary focus on affordable senior living communities. On the subject of affordable housing, Leslie suggested that AIPCP committee invite Charles Snuggs Director, Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs to come speak to us about the department's current methods being used to promote affordable housing, specifically regarding housing for seniors and the role that tax incentives and possibly disincentives play. Leslie also mentioned large owners/managers of rental property in Montgomery

County including: Grady, Southern Management, and Bozzuto. Also, Montgomery Housing Partnerships, a nonprofit owner of affordable rental properties recently completed development of their first senior housing property in downtown Silver Spring, The Bonifant. The Senior Cluster-Montgomery County Department Directors who meet annually to discuss proposed budget items for next FY that pertain to seniors are scheduled to meet shortly. Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs Director Clarence Snuggs will be the guest at the AIPCPC meeting which will be held on Feb. 21st, 9:30-11:30 to accommodate Mr. Snuggs schedule.

Health Planning, Services and Community Supports Committee (HPSCS) –

Dave Denton thanked Judy Peres for agreeing to co-chair the Committee. They hope to recruit additional COA members to serve on this committee. There are five 2017 goals:

- Follow-up to the Dental Summer Study
- MD Oral Health Plan input
- Support of legislative efforts
- Lobby for Medicaid coverage for older adults
- NACO discount dental program

Nexus Montgomery-WISH: Connection to Dementia Friendly Montgomery

Alignment of Age Friendly Montgomery Work Groups and COA Committee

Judy Peres noted that there are activities related to the End of Life Coalition and Advanced Care Planning

COA should do what we can to support Senior Center Plus Programs in Recreation Dept. facilities. Public Policy Committee (PPC)– John Honig and Stephanie Edelstein presented the following:

State Legislative Issues

Leslie Frey gave a brief report on legislative issues, including:

- The General Assembly convened yesterday.
- Several members of the Montgomery County delegation have leadership positions.
- Del. Will Smith (District 20) was appointed to fill Sen. Jamie Raskin's seat. The newly appointed Dist. 20 delegate is Janelle Wilkins.
- The Governor will present his budget on January 18, 2017.

Bills already filed or expected include:

- HB001 and HB 0065 – (2016 bills were HB580 and SB472) Maryland Healthy Working Families Act. Leslie has not yet analyzed the language of these bills, but it is likely that they will be consolidated or one withdrawn. Both would carve out jurisdictions that already have family leave laws, such as Montgomery County. The Governor plans to introduce his own bill, which is likely to be less generous than those already introduced; it is also expected to supersede existing county laws.
- SB293 – affecting taxes applied to certain military retirement for recipients age 65 and older.
- HB002 – expanding eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit to low income wage earners without children.

- SB047 – to conform current Maryland law regarding mandatory reporting of suspected resident abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation to the requirements of the reauthorized Older Americans Act.
- Attorney General Brian Frosh plans to introduce a package of bills, including one addressing excessive prescription price increases.
- Del. Mark Korman plans to introduce the Nursing Facility and Assisted Living Transparency Act, which would require facilities who have a website to post certain information for easy access by families and seniors.

County Budget and Legislative Advocacy

Council Bill 42-16 is still being considered. Rudy reported that the County Council’s Government Operations Committee will consider it at its meeting which was held on January 20. The bill provides 5-year property tax relief for citizens over 65 who have lived in their homes 40 years or more, or are retired members of the Armed Forces. But the bill limits eligible properties to those valued at \$500,000 or less. The Commission is on record urging that the property value be raised to \$700,000. Such a change would allow more seniors to age in place.

There was discussion about the County Executive’s FY18 budget forums. The CoA will be represented at each of the five forums. After discussion about the two forums that had already taken place. The Committee decided that it would be best to (1) provide a brief description of COA; (2) focus on the overarching issue of affordable housing at each forum, rather than trying to go through the entire list of budget priorities in a very short time or split up the list among forums, which loses consistency and can weaken the message; and, (3) ask a different question of the County Executive related to affordable housing, at each forum. The downtown Silver Spring forum will focus on availability of affordable rental units. Stephanie will draft revised talking points and questions for use at the upcoming forums.

There was additional discussion about housing and homelessness among older adults, and the housing elements of the Age Friendly Strategic Plan. There was also discussion about the possibility of affordable housing options as a topic for Summer Study.

COA Stakeholder Forum

The Stakeholder Forum will take place on March 29th, 9-12:30pm. It will be held at the Silver Spring Civic Building. There will be a panel discussion with Age Friendly Work Group chairs for Communications, Transportation, Home and Community Based Services, and Housing. There will be breakout sessions on these topics and will take a “speed dating” format where folks will move from one breakout session to another. Attendees will have opportunities to ask questions and identify gaps. There will be a press release.

Liaisons

- **Department of Transportation**–Faisal Khan updated the audience about the upcoming events that will take place. There will be a second round to present information and to gather community input on Maryland 355 project at two open houses, February 7th from 6:30-8:30pm at the Bioscience Education Building located at Montgomery College-Germantown Campus

20200 Observation Drive, Germantown MD and on February 8th from 6:30-8:30pm at the Executive Office Building, Cafeteria, 101 Monroe Street Rockville MD. Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in partnership with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), is planning the implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) on Maryland 355 (MD 355). This project is part of the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. MD 355 is an activity center corridor planned for high level of development. The first round taken place in spring of 2016, two open houses took place to discuss Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), a modern, flexible, lower cost, premium form of transportation that combines features of both a bus system and a light rail system. BRT features include: Dedicated lanes, which means no traffic congestion for riders Lane and signal priority allowing for shorter travel times Multiple doors and low floor vehicles, which result in quick, easy and efficient entry and exiting Pay stations to pay for the fares before boarding, which allows for faster boarding Vehicles with rubber tires which allow them to divert from the transitway on to local streets to provide neighborhood service. To find out more information on BRT please visit: [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BRT/Resources/Files/MD%20355%20Open%20House%20Handout_Final\(1\).pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BRT/Resources/Files/MD%20355%20Open%20House%20Handout_Final(1).pdf)

- **Keeping Seniors Safe(KSS)**–Morton Davis announced the great work KSS is doing and their latest accomplishment of receiving a proclamation from County Executive Leggett recognizing January as Keeping Seniors Safe in Montgomery County. Keeping Seniors Safe (KSS) is a program that has been developed in conjunction with the Volunteer Resources Section of the Montgomery County Police Department. The KSS program was established to increase awareness of safety issues within the senior community and to provide guidance and resources to seniors in regard to these issues. Keeping seniors Safe is currently looking for volunteers to become part of the KSS team and assist in conducting KSS presentations throughout Montgomery County. KSS meetings generally lasts one hour, which includes time for audience questions and comments. To learn more about the KSS program please contact the MCPD Volunteer Resources Section at 240-773-5625. You may also email them at Police.KSS@montgomerycountymd.gov for more information.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.